

MAINE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 3, 2003

Chair Darrel Fournier called the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission to order at 1:02 pm in the Maine Emergency Medical Services conference room. Members present were Jack Berry, Jay Bradshaw, Representative Thomas Bull, Chief Jeffrey Cammack, John Cannon, Art Cleaves, Representative Robert Duplessie, Chief Darrel Fournier, Albert Godfrey, Sr., Geoffrey Maker, Senator Richard Nass, Chief Jethro Pease, Joe Thomas (for John Dean), David Wacker, Steve Willis and Susan Pinette (staff). Members excused included Michael Albert, Senator Bruce Bryant, Edward Johnston, Harty Norris and Bill Williams. Representative Albion Goodwin of Pembroke, Lt. Hank Foster of the Scarborough Fire Department and Vicki Schmidt from Maine Fire Training and Education attended the meeting as guests of the Fire Commission.

Members made the following changes to the October meeting minutes:

1. Members will be noted as excused rather than absent.
2. Captain Harding Wentzell, not Gary Wentzell, is the correct name

A motion by Al Godfrey, seconded by Richard Nass, to accept the minutes of October 6, 2003 as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

Chief Fournier, noting no committee reports this month, asked the Fire Commission's permission to move directly to the presentation on the use of lights/ sirens on the personal vehicles of volunteer emergency personnel. Chief Fournier reminded members that the Legislature's Transportation committee requested the Fire Commission study this issue and report back its findings and any recommendations. Chief Fournier also noted his receipt of a letter from the president of the Maine Fire Chiefs stating the development of new technologies has made Maine law outdated and suggesting the Fire Commission recommend changes. Representative Albion Goodwin, sponsor of LD 111, and Lt. Hank Foster of the Scarborough Fire Department addressed Fire Commission members on the merits of allowing the increased use of lights/sirens. Lt. Foster distributed materials prior to his formal presentation.

A lengthy discussion followed Lt. Foster's presentation. Fire Commission members had many questions and comments. Concerns expressed by members included the differing needs in rural versus urban locales in Maine, overwhelming citizens with more sirens/ lights that might actually confuse people and/or cause them to not respond, disagreement within the fire services community and the need for accurate data and studies to support the conclusions and results. Other questions included whether more lighting on the personal vehicles corresponded to shorter response times and the possible link between

the amount of lighting and the behavior of the emergency responder. Members discussed focusing on two key issues:

1. Responding to the scene with more lights and sirens
2. Marking the area after arriving on the scene

A motion by Jack Berry, seconded by Al Godfrey, that the Fire Commission keeps lights and sirens connected during discussions of the use of lights and sirens for emergency response on personal vehicles. . The motion passed with four members opposed. (Tom Bull, Jethro Pease, Jeff Cammack and Richard Nass)

A motion by Jay Bradshaw, seconded by Jethro Pease, that the Fire Commission recommends to the Maine Legislature's Transportation Committee that current Maine law regarding emergency warning lights on personal vehicles en route to the emergency be maintained at this time. The motion is later withdrawn.

A motion by Tom Bull, seconded by Richard Nass, that the Fire Commission recommends to the Maine Legislature's Transportation Committee that current Maine law regarding the use of sirens on personal vehicles en route to the emergency be maintained. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion by Al Godfrey, seconded by Jethro Pease, that Deputy Town Forest Fire Warden be added to the current list of authorized vehicles (§2054 Definitions, B (16)). The motion is defeated with three members in favor. (Al Godfrey, Jethro Pease and Richard Nass)

A motion by Jethro Pease, seconded by Jay Bradshaw, recommend current Maine law (§2054 2. Authorized lights F(2) be changed to read "That the municipal officers or a municipal officer designated by the municipal officers, with the approval of the Fire Chief, may authorize an active member of a municipal or volunteer fire department to use red or red/white lights of a size capable of being mounted above the front bumper and below the roof of the vehicle. The light may be displayed, but only used while the member is en route to or at the scene of a fire or other emergency. The light or lights must be mounted to eliminate interference with the operator's vision". The motion included the recommendation that OPLA be asked to review the Fire Commission's recommendations and that §2054 2. Authorized lights F(2) and F(3) be combined. The motion passed unanimously.

Fire Commission members, citing questions regarding current Maine law, inquired whether the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis' (OPLA) staff would be available to answer legal questions and assist in drafting possible legislation. Staff will inquire about OPLA's availability for the December meeting.

The Blaine House Conference on Emergency First Response will be held on March 11, 2004 at the Augusta Armory on Western Avenue. The Spring Conference committee hopes to secure a keynote speaker before the next meeting.

The Legislative Reception will be held on March 10, 2004, the night before the Spring Conference, at the Ground Round Restaurant on Civic Center Drive from 5:00 to 8:00 pm. Representatives Duplessie and Bull and Senators Nass and Bryant will work on the invitations to legislators.

The Fire Service/EMS Day at the State House has been finalized for Tuesday, January 20, 2004 from 8:30-11:30am. Members agreed to serve coffee, juice, doughnuts and bagels in the Hall of Flags. Nametags for participants, greeters and additional displays were some suggestions made by members.

Members received a draft of the revisions of the Maine Fire Safety law. A handout with information on the Fire Safety Officer certification and Physical Fitness and Welfare training courses were also distributed.

Fire Commission members discussed truss construction (floor supports and roofing) and the concerns of this use in new buildings and renovations. Members suggested inviting the parties together at a future meeting and attempting to seek common ground. Suggestions included forming an organizing committee, holding the meeting in April or May, and looking to draft legislation for 2005.

Fire Commission members agreed to the following meeting schedule:

Monday, December 1, 2003	1:00pm	Regular Meeting **	MEMS
Monday, January 5, 2004	1:00pm	Regular Meeting	MEMS
Monday, February 2, 2004	1:00pm	Regular Meeting	MEMS

With no further business to come before the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission, Chair Fournier adjourned the meeting at 3:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Pinette
Staff